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t e n t c l a i m s

1.

A method for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value
 5 of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers
 for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing
 the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the
 return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the
 empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the
 10 empty packaging should be used in another manner,
 characterised by

- establishing a communications link between the reverse vending machine
 and a central, external database server (computer) when the user presses the
 second switch;
- 15 - transferring to the central database server information elements selected from
 the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - the time of the stake,
 - the monetary value of the stake, which corresponds to the return value of
 20 the returned empty packaging,
 - customer-related identification;
- registering the information elements in the database server and reserving a
 number of lottery tickets or shares in a lottery;
- communicating from the database server back to the reverse vending machine
 25 that lottery tickets have been allocated, in addition to information elements
 selected from the group consisting of:
 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - 30 - the number of tickets,
 - the time of the draw,
 - the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - graphic elements,
 - optional guiding information,
- 35 - confirming or cancelling the lottery ticket order;
- either a) on confirmation of a ticket order, issuing a lottery ticket with a ticket
 number or numbers and serial number or control code, and, via the

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communication line to the database server, confirming the ticket order and that a ticket has been issued, so that the ticket number or numbers concerned are stored in the database server;

- or b) on cancellation of the ticket order, communicating this to the database server and instead issuing a receipt for a refund to be paid in cash;
- or c) in the event of failure of the communication line with the database server, instead issuing a receipt for a refund in cash.

2.

10 A method for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the return value of the packaging should be issued for subsequent refund in cash from the
15 empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner, characterised by

- activating via a communication line a connection from the reverse vending machine to a central, external database server (computer) when the second
20 switch is pressed;
- transferring from the reverse vending machine to the central database server information elements selected from the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - the time of the stake,
 - 25 - the monetary value of the stake, which corresponds to the return value of the returned empty packaging,
 - customer-related identification;
 - registering the information elements in the database server and issuing a number of lottery tickets or shares in a lottery;
 - 30 - communicating from the database server back to the reverse vending machine that lottery tickets have been allocated, in addition to information elements selected from the group consisting of:
 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - 35 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - the number of tickets,
 - the time of the draw,

- the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - graphic elements,
 - optional guiding information;
- and

- 5 - issuing in the reverse vending machine a lottery ticket bearing the lottery ticket number or numbers and its serial number or control code.

3.

A method as disclosed in claim 2, characterised by

- 10 - confirming via the communication line to the database server that lottery tickets have been issued, so that the ticket number or numbers in question are stored in the database server.

4.

- 15 A method for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the
- 20 empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner,
- characterised by

- ordering, when the second switch is pressed, participation in a lottery with a number of tickets related to the return value of the empty packaging, and
- 25 activating via a communication line a connection to a central, external database server (computer); and
- issuing instead, in the event of a registered failure in communication in the connection with the database server, a receipt for a refund in cash.

30 5.

- A method for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the
- 35 return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner,

characterised by

allocating from a local database in the reverse vending machine, when the customer presses the second switch, and when a communications link between the reverse vending machine and a central, external database server (computer) is not establishable, a lottery ticket based on:

- the monetary value of the stake, which corresponds to the return value of the returned empty packaging, and with information added and selected from the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - the time of the stake,
 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - the number of tickets,
 - the time of the draw,
 - the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - graphic elements,
 - optional guiding information;
 - transferring to the central database server, when the connection is re-established, information elements selected from the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - the time of the stake,
 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - the number of tickets,
 - the time of the draw,
 - the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - customer-related identification,
- and
- registering the information elements in the database server and adding the ticket series to the tickets that are to participate in the lottery draw.

6.

A method as disclosed in claim 5, characterised in

- that the lottery ticket number series are pre-allocated to the reverse vending machine when the reverse vending machine has a communications link with the

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database server; and

that the lottery ticket serial number or control code either is allocated randomly from a serial number/control code package downloaded in the reverse vending machine from the database server, or is generated locally in the reverse vending machine using an algorithm.

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7.

A method as disclosed in claim 1, 2, 3 or 5, characterised by

- establishing the communication line via XML communication over a TCP/IP network.

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8.

A method as disclosed in claim 1, 2, 3, 5 or 7, characterised by

- checking in the database server the identity of the reverse vending machine against an identity-related address register to be able to announce where winning lottery tickets have been issued.

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9.

A method as disclosed in one or more of claims 1-3 and 5-8,

20 characterised in

- that the serial number or control code of the ticket is unique to the issued lottery ticket.

10.

25 A method as disclosed in claim 9, characterised in

- that the control code is generated non-serially.

11.

A system for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner,

35 characterised by

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a means in the reverse vending machine which, when the customer presses the second switch, is designed to activate via a communication line a connection to a central, external database server (computer);

- a means in the reverse vending machine designed to transfer from the reverse vending machine to the central database information elements selected from the group consisting of:

- the identity of the reverse vending machine,
- the time of the stake,
- the monetary value of the stake, which corresponds to the return value of the returned empty packaging,
- customer-related identification;

- a means in the database server for registering the information elements from the reverse vending machine and issuing a number of lottery tickets or shares in the lottery;

- a means in the reverse vending machine for communicating back from the database server to the reverse vending machine that lottery tickets have been allocated, in addition to information elements selected from the group consisting of:

- a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
- the serial number or control code of the ticket,
- the monetary value of the stake,
- the number of tickets,
- the time of the draw,
- the deadline for playing the lottery,
- graphic elements,
- optional guiding information;

- a means in the reverse vending machine for confirming or cancelling the lottery ticket order when activated by the customer;

- a means in the reverse vending machine for

either a) on confirmation of a ticket order, issuing a lottery ticket with a ticket numbers and serial number or control code and, via the communication line, to the database server confirming the ticket order and that a ticket has been issued, so that the ticket number or numbers concerned are stored in the database server;

or b) on cancellation of the ticket order, communicating this to the database server and

instead issuing a receipt for a refund to be paid in cash;

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or c) in the event of failure of the communication line with the database server, instead issuing a receipt for a refund in cash.

12.

- 5 A system for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the
- 10 empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner, characterised by
- a means in the reverse vending machine which, when the customer presses the second switch, is designed to activate via a communication line a connection to a
 - 15 central, external database server (computer);
 - a means in the reverse vending machine designed to transfer from the reverse vending machine to the central database information elements selected from the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - 20 - the time of the stake,
 - the monetary value of the stake, which corresponds to the return value of the returned empty packaging,
 - customer-related identification;
 - a means in the database server for registering the information elements from the reverse vending machine and issuing a number of lottery tickets or shares in the
 - 25 lottery;
 - a means in the reverse vending machine for communicating back from the database server to the reverse vending machine that lottery tickets have been allocated, in addition to information elements selected from the group consisting of:
 - 30
 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - the number of tickets,
 - 35 - the time of the draw,
 - the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - graphic elements,

- optional guiding information;

and

a means in the reverse vending machine for issuing a lottery ticket with a ticket number or numbers and a serial number or control code.

13.

A system as disclosed in claim 12, characterised by

- a means in the reverse vending machine for confirming via the communication line to the database server that lottery tickets have been printed out.

14.

A system for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner, characterised by

- a means in the reverse vending machine which, when the customer presses the second switch, is designed to order participation in a lottery with a number of tickets related to the return value of the empty packaging, and is designed to activate via a communication line a connection to a central database server (computer); and
- a means for instead issuing in the event of registered communication failure in the connection with the database server, a receipt for a refund in cash.

15.

A system for handling, through the use of a reverse vending machine, the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods, wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt relating to the return value of the packaging should be issued for a subsequent refund in cash from the empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging should be used in another manner, characterised by

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a means in the reverse vending machine which, when the customer presses the second switch, and when a communications link between the reverse vending machine and a central, external database server (computer) is not establishable, is designed to issue to the customer from a local database in the reverse vending machine a lottery ticket based on:

- 5 - the monetary value of the stake, which corresponds to the return value of the returned empty packaging, and with information added and selected from the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - 10 - the time of the stake,
 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - the number of tickets,
 - 15 - the time of the draw,
 - the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - graphic elements,
 - optional guiding information;
 - a means for issuing the lottery ticket;
 - 20 - a means in the reverse vending machine which on re-established connection is designed to transfer to the central database server information elements selected from the group consisting of:
 - the identity of the reverse vending machine,
 - the time of the stake,
 - 25 - a ticket number series, e.g., with start and end number,
 - the serial number or control code of the ticket,
 - the monetary value of the stake,
 - the number of tickets,
 - the time of the draw,
 - 30 - the deadline for playing the lottery,
 - customer-related identification,
- and
- a means in the database server designed to register the information elements and add the ticket series to the tickets that are to participate in the lottery draw.

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16.

A system as disclosed in claim 15, characterised in

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that the reverse vending machine has a unit designed to receive pre-allocated lottery ticket number series from the database server when the reverse vending machine has a communications link with the database server; and

- that said unit is either designed to receive a download from the database server of a lottery ticket serial number or control code package and to allocate issued lottery tickets serial numbers or control code selectably, e.g., randomly from the package or generated locally in the reverse vending machine using an algorithm.

17.

10 A system as disclosed in one of claims 12-16, characterised in

- that the serial number or control code that is provided on the lottery ticket is a code that is unique to the issued lottery ticket.

18.

15 A system as disclosed in claim 17, characterised in

- that the serial number or control code is generated non-serially.

19.

A system as disclosed in one or more of claims 12-18, characterised in

- 20 - that the issuing means is a printer, e.g., a thermal printer.

20.

A reverse vending machine for handling the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and foods,

25 wherein the reverse vending machine has a means for allowing the customer to indicate either by activating a first switch that a receipt is to be issued relating to the return value of the empty packaging for a subsequent refund in cash from the empty packaging recipient, or by activating a second switch that the return value of the empty packaging is to be used in another way, characterised in

- 30 - that the reverse vending machine is designed to receive empty packaging which has a return value in the form of a deposit value and empty packaging having another return value;
- that the reverse vending machine in a known manner has means for recognising empty packaging having a deposit value and allocating a return value for such
- 35 packaging;
- that the reverse vending machine is equipped with known means per se for identifying characteristics of empty packaging having another return value, for

FIG. 1A
FIG. 1B

example, related to characteristics selected from the group consisting of: material type in general, colour of glass or plastic, plastic type, metal type(s), weight, shape indentifiers (for example, bar codes) and a means for allocating any payable return value.

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21.

A reverse vending machine as disclosed in claim 20, characterised in

- that said other way is a lottery; and
 - that the reverse vending machine, when the second button is pressed, has a
- 10 means for communicating with a lottery database server for converting the accumulated return value of inserted empty packaging into lottery tickets in the lottery, and a means for issuing lottery tickets.

22.

- 15 The use of a reverse vending machine for handling the return value of empty packaging, e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans and containers for beverages and food, wherein the activating of a first switch determines that a receipt should be issued related to the return value of the empty packaging for a subsequent refund in cash from the empty packaging recipient, and wherein alternatively, the activating of a second
- 20 button is determines that the return value of the empty packaging should be converted into a sum of money for participation in a lottery.

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- The use of a reverse vending machine for handling the return value of empty packaging,
- 25 e.g., empty packaging in the form of bottles, cans or containers for beverages and foods, wherein the return value refund is converted by the customer via manipulation of the reverse vending machine into a lottery ticket for participation in a lottery with a stake corresponding to the value of the refund.